

Overview of the King County Region Accountable Community of Health Development

As of August 2015

What’s behind the Accountable Community of Health initiative?

In 2014 Washington created an ambitious 5- year plan to improve health and health care. [Healthier Washington](#) is a roadmap for transforming health and health care in our state in order to achieve better care for individuals and better health of the population at lower costs. Late in 2014, the state received a five-year, \$65 million federal grant to carry out Healthier Washington strategies.

Regional collaboratives are a building block of the plan. To create lasting change in health and in healthcare, local innovation and partnerships are critical because so many factors and sectors influence our health. Clinical care accounts for about 20%, our health behaviors 30%, social and economic factors 40%, and the physical environment 10%.

To help bring clinical and community partners together to carry out high priority health improvement strategies and align their efforts around shared results, the plan calls for the creation of regionally based Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs). The emerging ACHs are engaging many sectors that affect health, such as health care payers and providers, behavioral health, public health, social services, housing and community/economic development, philanthropic organizations, education, health equity and social justice coalitions, and governmental entities, including Tribes.

Nine ACH regions established. Washington identified nine ACH regions that together cover the entire state. King County is a single-county ACH region. The State is [partnering with each region](#) to invest in ACH development and proof of concept, building on collaborations already underway. Washington intends to formally “designate” an ACH coalition in each region when they have established a sufficiently strong foundation of governance and administrative infrastructure—interim or otherwise—to move to the next phase of development.

ACH Regions Map



How has ACH development evolved in the King County region?

Focused on advancing what the region is already trying to make happen. Many organizations in the King County region are involved in innovative, cross-sector partnerships to improve community health and well-being, because working together can produce better results than working alone – especially for the most complex challenges. Therefore, the King County region has been approaching ACH development as an opportunity to strengthen this infrastructure in order to both catalyze even more innovation and better spread and sustain what works.

Washington’s ACH initiative commenced just when the forward-looking *King County Health and Human Services Transformation Plan* was completed with community partners. This plan recognizes that the region’s overall high quality of life masks profound disparities in health and well-being. It aims to address those disparities through greater collaboration, better integrated and “whole person” models of care delivery, and prevention-focused strategies that address the upstream, social determinants of health. In this way, the Health and Human Service Transformation Plan is very consistent with the state’s Healthier Washington vision.

What was the upshot of the initial 2014 ACH planning phase in King County?

In mid-2014, the Washington Health Care Authority made available grants of up to \$50,000 for regions across the state to begin planning for ACH development. Public Health - Seattle & King County, with support from consultants Cedar River Group and Watanabe Consultation, served as the planning phase grantee for the King County region.

Together with stakeholders the following major recommendations¹ were made:

- Partner with and learn from high priority initiatives already underway, including the *King County Health and Human Services Transformation Plan*, to assure “**form follows function**” in ACH development.
- In 2015, don’t jump to creating too much infrastructure too fast. Focus on **showing value and progress** relative to existing initiatives.
- Work to resource and promote authentic **community engagement** in subsequent phases of ACH design work; doing so is critical for assuring that ACH activities lead to greater health equity and lasting change.
- Create an **interim ACH leadership council** in 2015 to guide the next phase of development, and charge it with developing and transitioning to a more formalized governance structure.

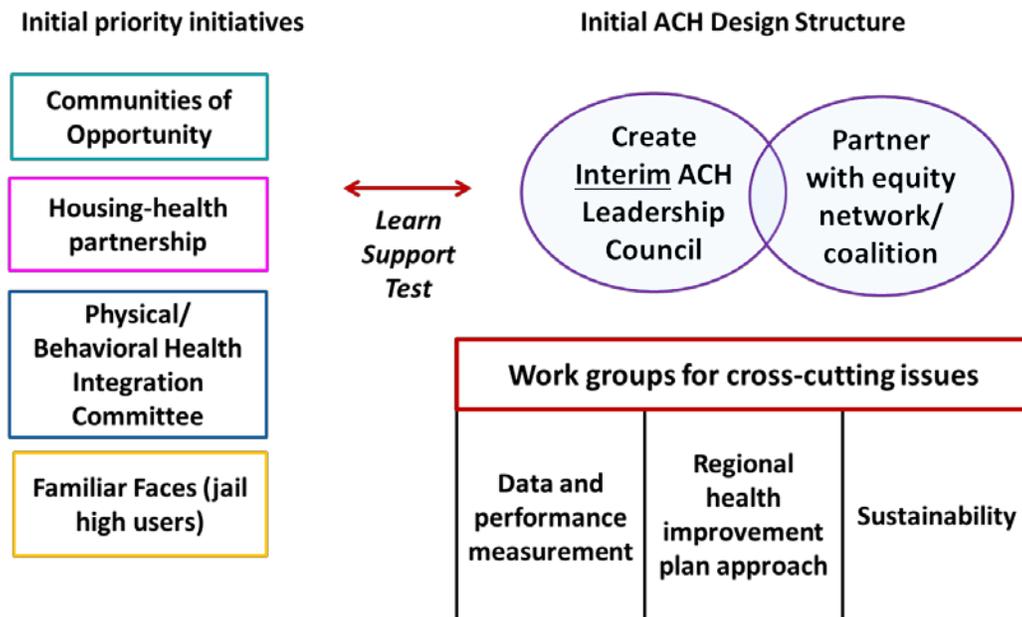
At the end of the planning phase, Public Health received a \$100,000 design grant from the Washington Health Care Authority to convene and support the ACH interim leadership council in 2015. Many partners are bringing in-kind time and other forms of support to the work, as well.

¹ The planning phase report, *A Path Forward for ACH Design in King County, Washington (December 2014)*, is available at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/health-human-services-transformation/ach.aspx>.

How is the 2015 ACH design work organized?

The graphic below shows the structure of the ACH design work for the King County region.

- On the left are four existing high priority initiatives in different stages of development. The ACH leadership council and its workgroups will support them moving forward, as appropriate, and learn from them to inform ACH structure and governance.
- Another critical piece of the design strategy is to partner with and build capacity in equity networks/coalitions because community engagement mechanisms will bring on-the-ground context expertise into ACH design, decision-making, and implementation.
- Cross-cutting work groups will support both the four existing initiatives, as well as make recommendations about the longer-term structures the ACH partnership will need and how to organize to accomplish them.



Learn more about the four initiatives:

[Communities of Opportunity](#) – is working to create greater health, social, economic, and racial equity in specific geographic areas of King County where disparities are the greatest.

[Housing-health partnership planning](#) - seeks to develop a sustainable business model for improving the health of multi-family affordable housing residents and surrounding neighborhoods by using affordable housing as platform for housing-health partnerships.

[Physical/Behavioral Health Integration](#) – will be designing a model to move toward fully integrated care and financing across physical and behavioral health, focused on Medicaid recipients.

[Familiar Faces](#) – intends to improve outcomes in health, housing, and justice system involvement while reducing per capita costs. Focuses on adults who are high users of the King County jail who have a mental health and/or substance abuse condition.

What is the role of the King County ACH Interim Leadership Council?

The ACH Interim Leadership Council is guiding the next phase of the ACH development in King County. Information about its members and meetings is available on the [King County ACH website](#). Meetings are open to the public. In June, members agreed on a [charter](#) to guide its work.

The Interim Leadership Council will develop structures that will enable cross-sector health improvement efforts to be as successful and sustainable as possible. Members will explore strategies for future sustainability, an approach to a future regional health improvement plan, and how best to align with Healthier Washington's [statewide common performance measures](#) and with other ACHs across the state.

The ACH is in its early, formative stages. State and community partners will continue to come together to plan, implement, measure, and adjust strategies in the months and years to come. The Interim Leadership Council welcomes comments from interested parties, either at its meetings or by writing to hhstransformation@kingcounty.gov.

Key deliverables in 2015 will include: An ACH Readiness Proposal to submit to the Washington Health Care Authority for ACH designation; an approach to a future regional health improvement plan, an approach to sustainability planning, and an approach to governance and administrative functions that includes ongoing processes for making adjustments as the environment changes.

Staying Informed and Getting Involved

- Sign up for stakeholder e-mail distribution list by writing to: hhstransformation@kingcounty.gov
- Visit the King County ACH website – still a work in progress, you'll find more resources posted here over time as work moves forward: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/HHStransformation/ach.aspx>
- Visit the Healthier Washington ACH website: http://www.hca.wa.gov/hw/Pages/communities_of_health.aspx
- King County region ACH contacts: Gena Morgan at gena.morgan@kingcounty.gov or Janna Wilson janna.wilson@kingcounty.gov

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